

Message Text

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42

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 IO-10 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0123

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

USLO PEKING PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 05509

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, VS, VN

SUBJECT: DIPLOMATIC NOTE ON VIETNAM SITUATION

REF: LONDON 5457, STATE 82184

1. I MADE FORMAL DELIVERY OF US DIPLOMATIC NOTE ON VIETNAM SITUATION TO FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN AT NOON TODAY (INFORMAL COPY HAD BEEN PASSED TO FCO EARLIER THIS MORNING).

2. I UNDERScored THE PASSAGE IN THE NOTE WHICH URGED THE UK GOVERNMENT TO CALL ON HANOI TO ADHERE TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT. CALLAGHAN'S INITIAL REACTION WAS SHARP. HE SAID, "I DON'T GO ALONG WITH YOU ON VIETNAM." HE DIDN'T SEE THAT THE BRITISH COULD MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT. CALLAGHAN CONTINUED THAT THE SAIGON REGIME WAS FINISHED. IT DOES NOT HAVE THE MORAL AUTHORITY TO STAY IN CONTROL

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OF THE SITUATION. NO ACT OR STATEMENT BY THE UNITED

KINGDOM NOW WOULD ALTER THE COURSE OF EVENTS. THERE HAD, CALLAGHAN CONCEDED, BEEN AGGRESSION BY THE NORTH BUT THIEU DOES NOT HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE SOUTH VEITNAMESE PEOPLE. THE TRAGEDY OF THE SITUATION IS THE PEOOLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM HAVE NO CHOICE; THEY DO NOT WANT THE COMMUNISTS OF THE NORTH NOR DO THEY WANT THE THIEU REGIME. CALLAGHAN SAID THAT HE WOULD CONSIDER WHAT THE UK COULD DO BUT HE DID NOT SEE THAT THEY COULD MAKE THE CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE WHICH THE US HOPED FOR.

3. I REVIEWED BRIEFLY THE BACKQROUND OF THE PARIS ACCORDS NOTING THEIR FLAGRANT VIOLATION BY HANOI. THE UNITED STATES, I SAID, COULD HAVE COUNTERED THE NORTH VIETNAMESE THRUST BUT, FOR REASONS STATED IN THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH LAST NIGHT, WE DID NOT DO SO. THE RESULT, THEREFORE, HAS BEEN THAT THE VIOLATIONS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS LOOK LIKELY TO CAUSE THE DESTRUCTION OF SOUTH VIETNAM. THE UNITED KINGDOM, I THOUGHT, SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT SUCH AN OUTCOME. FOR THIS TO HAPPEN WITHOUT PROTEST WOULD BE A SAD COMMENTARY ON THE EFFEC-TIVENESS OF INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY.

4. CALLAGHAN DEMURRED. HE THOUGHT THE PRESENT SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM WAS ATTRIBUTABLE TO FAR MORE THAN CONGRESSIONAL REFUSAL TO VOTE FUNDS. WE ARE, HE SAID, SEEING THE INEVITABLE END OF A TRAGEDV -- A TRAGEDY FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AS WELL. HE AGREED THAT THE PRESENT SITUATION WAS CAUSED BY AGGRESSION FROM THE NORTH WHICH OUGHT TO BE CONDEMNED. HE COULD SAY THIS PRIVATELY BUT NOT PUBLICLY. THIEU, HE WAS CONVINCED, COULD NOT HOLD OUT AND HE DOUBTED ANYONE IN HIS PLACE COULD DO SO. I THEN POINTED OUT THAT THE EXPRESSIONS OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN MIGHT AT LEAST HELP TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION AT SOME POINT SHORT OF TOTAL SURRENDER. AT THE VERY LEAST, SOME COLLECTIVE INTERNATIONAL ACTION WAS NEEDED TO PREVENT THE LOSS OF LIFE, PROTECT PEOPLE WHO SHOULD LEAVE VIETNAM, AND HELP BRING ABOUT ORDERLY CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT.

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5. CALLAGHAN SAID AT THIS POINT THAT HE WOULD GIVE CARE-FUL CONSIDERATION TO A RESPONSE TO THE US NOTE WHICH WOULD NOT ACCENTUATE OUR DIFFERENCES BUT WHICH WOULD NOT TAKE THE US LINE. HE WANTED TO BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE AND WOULD NOT RUB SALT IN WOUNDS.

6. WE AGREED THAT IF QUERIED ABOUT THE US NOTE ON VIET-NAM WHEN THE NOTE IS RELEASED TODAY IN WASHINGTON, A

FOREIGN OFFICE SPOKESMAN WOULD STATE THAT I DISCUSSED A
NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL TOPICS WITH THE FOREIGN SECRETARY
AT A PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED MEETING. AMONG THE TOPICS
DISCUSSED WAS VIETNAM ABOUT WHICH I HANDED HIM THE US
NOTE. FCO SPOKESMAN WILL ADD THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT
IS NOW STUDYING THIS COMMUNICATION.
RICHARDSON

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